

SPECIFICATION

In the section entitled "BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS" add the following two sentences:

Fig. 5 shows the invention in combination with the bumper fascia of a vehicle. The component marked 3 is the bumper fascia of the vehicle.

DRAWINGS

In response to examiner's comment 2 under Detailed Action a new drawing sheet is submitted. This sheet shows the bumper fascia of the vehicle in combination with the cover as recited in claim 3.

This sheet becomes 3/3. The first sheet would be changed to 1/3 and the second sheet changed to 2/3.

REMARKS

Figure 5 is suitable for use on the first page of the published patent.

By this amendment applicant has amended Claim 1 to correct the informality stated by Examiner in comment 1 of the detailed action to reflect that this invention covers and protects a trailer hitch receiver as well as additional components proximate to the receiver such as the safety chain anchors and electrical connections.

In response to examiner's comment 2 under Detailed Action a new drawing sheet is submitted. This sheet shows the bumper fascia in combination with the cover as recited in the original claim 3.

Also, applicant has rewritten all claims to define the invention more particularly and distinctly so as to overcome the technical rejections and define the invention patentably over the prior art.

The References and Differences of the Present Invention Thereover

Prior to discussing the claims and the above points, applicant will first discuss the references and the general novelty of the present invention and its unobviousness over the references.

Parker shows the design of a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. This reference may protect some other trailer hitch components from blows and rough handling. Some trailer hitch components may still be susceptible to blows and rough handling depending on their location in relation to the receiver tube. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge; it merely has the two lower corners turned in slightly. This reference is not suitable for molding since it has a wide thin structure with no means of support for the molded material. It is more suitably created of fabricated sheet metal and welded together. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Young, et al. shows the design of a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. This reference is only slightly larger than the receiver tube opening. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture from the safety chain anchors or electrical connections. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge but consists of a convex face with flat sides. This reference is essentially square approximately four inches wide. Applicant's device in its preferred embodiment would be much larger and wider than tall. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference may not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it may increase the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections.

This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Turner shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference is designed primarily to add collision protection to the rear of the vehicle. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening from impact. This reference may protect some other trailer hitch components from blows and rough handling. Some trailer hitch components may still be susceptible to blows and rough handling depending on their location in relation to the receiver tube. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge; it merely has the two outer edges turned in slightly. This reference is not suitable for molding since it has a wide thin structure designed for strength from impact. It is more suitably created of metal and welded together. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Fulkerson shows a device which offers only limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This device primarily improves the aesthetics of a vehicle with a trailer hitch attached when viewed from the rear. This reference hangs below a vehicle bumper and is completely open to the elements toward the front of the vehicle. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to impact from road debris thrown up from the road or by the tires. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture introduced from the front of the vehicle. The trailer hitch is still exposed to the elements including dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from water and mud thrown up from the road or the tires. This reference does

not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. Since this reference is open in the front it will act as a substantial drag on the vehicle and reduce gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver. This reference does not mount to the receiver tube. This reference does not have a square post to insert into the receiver opening.

Dahl shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver, but instead has a hole to allow a bolt to be passed through.

Roberts shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference is designed primarily for protection from collision. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it greatly increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver

area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be molded but will be a welded metal product. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Casson shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it greatly increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be molded but will be a metal product. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Powell shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening in one preferred embodiment. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the

outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

McClellan shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference is designed primarily for protection from collision. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Oswood shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference is designed primarily for protection from collision. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage.

This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

McPheters shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference is designed primarily for protection from collision. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

Deerman shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to blows and rough handling. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference is designed primarily for protection from collision. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference will not be aesthetically pleasing. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will add drag to the vehicle and decrease its gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in

cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

The rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Parker in comment 4 of the Detailed Action.

Parker shows the design of a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. This reference may protect some other trailer hitch components from blows and rough handling. Some trailer hitch components may still be susceptible to blows and rough handling depending on their location in relation to the receiver tube. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge, it merely has the two lower corners turned in slightly. This reference is not suitable for molding since it has a wide thin structure with no means of support for the molded material. It is more suitably created of fabricated sheet metal and welded together. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

The rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Young in comment 5 of the Detailed Action.

Young, et al. shows the design of a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening. This reference is only slightly larger than the receiver tube opening. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture from the safety chain anchors or electrical connections. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and

moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge but consists of a convex face with flat sides. This reference is essentially square approximately four inches wide. Applicants device in its preferred embodiment would be much larger and wider than tall. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference may not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it may increase the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

The rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Turner in comment 6 of the Detailed Action.

Turner shows a device which offers only very limited protection to the trailer hitch components. This reference is designed primarily to add collision protection to the rear of the vehicle. This reference only protects the receiver tube opening from impact. This reference may protect some other trailer hitch components from blows and rough handling. Some trailer hitch components may still be susceptible to blows and rough handling depending on their location in relation to the receiver tube. This reference does not seal out dirt, mud and moisture. The receiver is still exposed to the elements including sunlight, dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from UV damage from sunlight and corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not have a curved lower edge, it merely has the two outer edges turned in slightly. This reference is not suitable for molding since it has a wide thin structure designed for strength from impact. It is more suitably created of metal and welded together. This reference is not molded of a resilient and semi-pliable material. This reference will not protect passersby from striking their legs on a hard hitch component; in fact it increases the chances of such an injury. This reference will not seal out mud, dirt and moisture from the trailer hitch receiver area including safety chain anchors and electrical connections. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. This

reference will increase drag and reduce the gas mileage of the vehicle it is used on. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. This reference will not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

The rejection of claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fulkerson in view of Dahl.

1. The present invention produces superior results to either Fulkerson, Dahl or the combination of the two. Even a combination of these two references would be inferior to the present invention. This reference hangs below a vehicle bumper and is completely open to the elements toward the front of the vehicle. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to impact from road debris thrown up from the road or by the tires. These references do not seal out dirt, mud and moisture introduced from the front of the vehicle. The trailer hitch is still exposed to the elements including dirt, mud and moisture. The trailer hitch components are still susceptible to corrosion damage from moisture. This reference does not cover and protect safety chain anchors or electrical connections from water and mud thrown up from the road or the tires. This reference does not complete and enclose the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on. This reference does not smooth the outside of the vehicle and thereby reduce drag and improve gas mileage. Since this reference is open in the front it will act as a substantial drag^To the vehicle and reduce gas mileage. This reference will not have molded-in cavities to further protect trailer hitch components and lend strength to the finished product. These references do not have molded-in tabs to retain the device on to the trailer hitch receiver.

2. The present invention solves problems not addressed or recognized by either of the two references. The present invention seals the opening in the bumper fascia of the vehicle it is used on and keeps out mud, dirt and moisture. The present invention protects additional trailer hitch components like the safety chain anchors and electrical connections from damage and corrosion. The present invention smoothes the outside of the vehicle aerodynamically and will improve gas mileage. The present invention will have depressions and tabs molded in. These problems are addressed by the present invention and not by the quoted references even in combination.

3. The combination of these two references is not possible because the Fulkerson cover stays on the vehicle when towing and the Dahl device must be removed to tow anything. If the two were combined, the entire cover of Fulkerson would have to be removed to allow towing and this would defeat the object of the invention. This would make a combined product inoperative.

4. The combination of advantages incorporated into the present invention has never been done before and solves more problems than either reference or both of them.
5. The combination of advantages incorporated into the present invention has not been suggested by either reference.
6. The present invention solves a great and as yet unsolved need. The present invention would improve the performance, appearance and functionality of millions of vehicles currently on the road today and has not as yet been addressed by anyone else.
7. The combination of the two references is strained and only thought of in hindsight.
8. Each of the two references is complete and the combination of the two is not suggested by either.
9. The present invention is more useful and has better synergism than the two cited references separately.
10. These two references take different approaches and are for different purposes so they teach away from each other and each reaches its conclusions using different paths.

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, applicant submits that the specification and claims are now in proper form, and that the claims all define patentability over the prior art.

Therefore, applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully solicited.